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## **India as an emerging power in international climate negotiations**

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### **Abstract**

India's negotiation strategies in international climate policy have considerably changed over the past decade. While core positions have not altered substantially, the way they were presented and supported at the international level reveals major changes. In particular between 2007 and 2011, India's international climate policy shifted from defensive, pure distributive strategies toward mixed strategies with a number of 'value-creating' elements, dynamism and flexibility became clearly visible in India's international climate policy. This shift is confirmed by evidence from a novel dataset based on an assessment of country submissions at the UNFCCC negotiations, negotiation summaries and interviews with an Indian delegate and representatives of other delegations. India's change in strategy appears to be driven by several factors: developments in the national political landscape whereby the personality of the delegation leader and minister in charge plays a critical role, a general trend related to rising public awareness of India's vulnerability to climate change, increasing domestic energy constraints, direct economic benefits from the Kyoto Protocol's market mechanisms, reactions to international pressure from other developing countries, and increased reporting by domestic media.

**Key words:** climate cooperation, climate negotiations, negotiation strategy, India

## 1. Introduction

This paper discusses India's positions, strategies and successes in the international climate negotiations, and thereby provides case study evidence complementing the more general studies of Bailer (2012) and Weiler (2012), both in this issue. India is of particular interest for at least three reasons. First, in the international climate negotiations, it has emerged as a highly relevant player in recent years. Second, it is highly vulnerable to climate change (due to persistent poverty and a high share of agriculture in GDP) and has high and increasing levels of GHG emissions, ranking fourth after China, the US and Japan. Thus India is both a victim of historical (and current) emissions by industrialised countries, and a major polluter (who, on its own, could contribute substantially to a containment of future global emissions). Third, India is also becoming an economic power, whereby the large overall size of the economy amplifies the internationally perceived relevance of its impressive growth rates during the last two decades. Some authors argue that India's economic take-off in the early 1990s has generally led to a significant change in its international negotiation strategies (see, in particular, Mohan, 2003), while others argue that the trend is not yet clear (Narlikar, 2006, 2010). These arguments, in the context of international climate policy, are re-examined based on a novel, hand-coded dataset compiled on the basis of interviews with negotiators<sup>1</sup>, official country submissions, and daily summaries of sessions of the negotiations of the process under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) published in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* (ENB) (see Annex 1, Weiler 2012; see also Castro, et al., 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> Note that for each country delegation, only one delegate was interviewed. The data may thus not reflect the position of the entire delegation or of all its senior members. However, the interview statements are supplemented by other sources.

Section 2 provides a brief summary of India's core positions and traditional negotiation strategies in international climate policy, along with a number of reasons why these may have changed over time. In Section 3 India's current positions and negotiation strategies are analysed. Finally, in Section 4, it is concluded that despite its traditionally entrenched negotiation positions, India has increasingly used more open, integrative, value-creating negotiation strategies in the UNFCCC negotiations.

## **2. India's traditional positions and negotiation strategies**

India's core positions in international climate policy have always been very clear (see e.g. Sengupta, 2012, pp. 104ff.; Raghunandan, 2012):

- Any international burden sharing has to take place on the basis of *per capita* emissions, historical responsibility, and economic capacity.
- As a consequence, industrialised countries should take up binding mitigation commitments, while developing countries should not. Industrialised countries' mitigation efforts should be substantial.

Just as in other areas of international negotiations, India has presented itself as a leader of developing countries (notably G77), and its negotiation strategy has been characterised by its 'civilisational' rhetoric, high opening demands and an appeal to moral, 'Third Worldist' imperatives. Across different areas of international negotiations India has become increasingly known as a redoubtable 'nay-sayer' that insisted on its positions and accepted neither compromise nor side-payments (Cohen, 2001, p. 66ff.; Narlikar, 2006, 2010; Narlikar and Odell, 2006). Mohan (2003, p. 260-63) has captured this defensive, distributive strategy through the metaphor of a porcupine, who has a fixed position and shows its spines rather than moving.

However, as Mohan (2003) has noted, with India's economic transformation in the early 1990s, there has been a general transition towards using mixed strategies with new integrative elements, a transition from acting like a 'porcupine' to acting like a 'tiger'. While a tiger is strong and certainly not expected to give in more easily than a porcupine, it is also a versatile and quickly moving animal, one that symbolises the new dynamics that started in the early 1990s. As a tiger, India should be more self-confident, and should advance new ideas, proposals and solutions acceptable to all rather than defending entrenched positions fixed once and for all. Using the metaphor of a tiger rather than a porcupine to describe India's negotiation behaviour indicates a shift towards using mixed strategies with considerable value-creating elements.

Already in the early days of international climate policy, a few instances of India's dynamic negotiation behaviour with value-creating elements can be observed. Indeed, according to Jakobsen (1999), the formulation of the UNFCCC's principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' corresponds to an Indian proposal of compromise between northern advocates of 'common responsibilities' and southern proponents of a 'main responsibility of industrialised countries' (Vihma' 2011, p. 10). At the first Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Berlin 1995 (COP 1), India broke ranks with the forces within G77 that wanted to prevent progress (mainly the OPEC countries), put its weight behind the protocol proposal of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), created the 'green group', and was crucial in securing the 'Berlin Mandate' (Dunn, 1995). Shortly after COP 8 in Delhi, 2002, India also reversed its initial opposition to the introduction of market mechanisms (e.g. the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)) in the Kyoto Protocol (Shukla et al., 2004).

However, until the mid-2000s, these instances of actively seeking compromise and pushing the negotiations forward remain rare exceptions to India's generally prevailing

defensive, distributive strategy. Certainly, there has been no revision to India's core negotiation positions stated above.

However, there is reason to believe that both India's strategies, and – at least at the margins – India's positions, have changed in more recent years, along with the emergence of a domestic climate policy dialogue. Dubash (2012b) suggests that there are three groups of domestic Indian actors: (i) the 'growth first stonewallers', (ii) the 'progressive realists', and (iii) the 'progressive internationalists'. Each of these groups has members in the public and private sector alike. The 'growth first stonewallers' are characterized by the traditional and still widely-held position that climate policy is an issue India should not care about (given that its need for economic development requires other priorities). The international request for India to curb its emissions is seen as a geopolitical threat and an attempt by industrialized countries to prevent India's rise to economic power, as emissions reductions invariably reduce growth (see Purkayastha and Mandal, 2010). India is perceived as a very small emitter, only contributing marginally to the current stock of historical emissions, and as too poor to be able to prioritize climate policy over economic development. Stonewallers believe that the fighting against the consequences of climate change should be entirely dealt with by the industrialized countries that created the problem in the first place.

By contrast, the two progressive groups recognize the need for India to actively engage in the climate change mitigation and both believe that it will be strongly hit by the consequences of climate change. Thus, climate policy and economic development (or poverty reduction) are viewed as complementary, rather than conflicting, objectives. The two groups are distinguished by the extent to which they have lost trust in the international community to solve the problem of climate change. 'Progressive realists' call for proactive policies at the national level, but do not link them to the international

negotiations. At the international level they agree with the stonewallers' defensive, value-claiming traditional diplomacy, and oppose any commitment that would constrain the country in its national policy options. Thus any commitments below the high end of the business-as-usual (BAU) scenarios computed by the Climate Modelling Forum are avoided. This would allow India to double its emissions by 2020 and to quadruple them by 2030. The global emissions budget proposal of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS, 2010, p. 60) is a typical case. NGOs like the Centre for Science and Environment also belong to this group.

Progressive internationalists push for an active national climate policy that should be made known internationally, and used within the international negotiations to achieve concessions by other Parties and to move the global process towards a successful global mitigation strategy. They include important research institutions such as The Energy and Research Institute (TERI), the Indian Institute of Management (IIM-Ahmedabad) and Integrated Research and Action for Development IRADe.

While the progressive groups are still relatively small, notably the internationalists, there is some evidence that they have strengthened and become more vocal over time (Dubash, 2012b; Vihma, 2011). Four factors can be identified as the major drivers of this development:

First, there has been an increasing awareness of climate change in India and that it is highly vulnerable to it. The available literature indicates that during the early years of international climate policy, the vulnerability of India to climate change was hardly discussed in India itself. Discussions about it first emerged in 2002 at COP 8 in Delhi, when Rajendra K. Pachauri was elected as Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Yet, according to interviews carried out by Vihma (2011, p. 14), the Indian elite was not generally conscious of the problems involved until 2008.

In 2009, however, COP 15 in Copenhagen led to an unprecedented climate policy debate (see e.g. Ahuja, 2009; Joshi and Patel, 2009, Kapur et al., 2009).

Second, there has been strong energy demand growth of the economy in the absence of sufficient domestic energy resources calling for energy-efficiency even independently of climate change considerations. Along with the energy requirements of India's growing economy and the consumption needs of its large population, there has been increased awareness that there is a serious shortage of energy resources, especially oil and gas, and coal. Oil and gas are now generally imported, while coal supply has lagged in the face of demand (leading to rationing through so-called 'coal linkages'). As Bhushan (2009, p. 14) has emphasised, the effort of Indian entrepreneurs is needed to reduce energy consumption in order to remain competitive. Overall, energy security concerns have implicitly strengthened the case for national climate policy in India.

Third, there are direct economic and financial benefits for India from climate policy instruments (e.g. CDM), which have been agreed at the international level. For example, the CDM became operational only after the Kyoto Protocol procedures were fully defined at COP 7 in Marrakech in November 2001. When COP 8 was held one year later in Delhi, Indian entrepreneurs had become fully aware of this new mechanism and – once the national approval body had been set up in 2003 – started to develop the first projects, with India's world market share reaching over 50% in the fourth quarter of 2005. Currently, India is the second largest CDM host country. As Indian CDM project developers have mostly spent their own funds on the CDM projects, they could wait until CERs were actually issued. As the prices for CERs have oscillated between EU€10 and €15 for the majority of the period they have been traded on exchanges, with the 260 million CERs issued to date corresponding to private benefits of €2.5 – 3.7 billion.



Finally, along with the country's sustained growth performance, there has been mounting international pressure on India to take up mitigation commitments. For instance, India, along with China, has been blamed by other developing countries, such as Bangladesh and the Maldives, for the 2009 deadlock in the international negotiation process. In fact, other developing countries' criticism was the main argument put forward by the Minister of Environment and Forestry and Indian chief negotiator Jairam Ramesh, in India's upper house of parliament, for adopting a new international negotiation position at COP 15 in Copenhagen (Vihma 2011, p. 15). The external criticism thus contributed to the rise of progressive internationalists, and provided them with compelling arguments for a change in India's international negotiation strategy.

Driven by the strong and charismatic personality of Minister Ramesh (in office from May 2009- July 2011 before being promoted to a higher ministerial rank) these four developments have been accompanied by a dramatic increase in domestic media coverage.<sup>2</sup>

### **3. India's positions and strategies in the late 2000s**

#### **3.1. Overview**

Along with these developments at the domestic level, the frequency with which India has presented itself as a proactive player, one that is trying to advance the international negotiations, has significantly increased in the late 2000s. For example, at COP 13 in Bali, 2007, India formally accepted that, at least on a voluntary basis, developing

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed review of the relevant literature and supporting statistics, see Michaelowa and Michaelowa (2011); for further details on the development of the debate within India, see Dubash, (2012a, Parts IV- V).

countries should participate in the global effort to mitigate climate change (Ghosh, 2007). Moreover, the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), released in June 2008 shortly before the G8 Summit, demonstrated India's own willingness to participate in the global mitigation effort (Jha, 2009, p. 33). To further signal its goodwill, India made the commitment, shortly before COP 15 in Copenhagen, 2009, to never exceed Annex I *per capita* emissions and also added a self-imposed intensity goal of reducing its carbon emissions per unit of GDP by 20–25% from 2005 levels until 2020. India took a leading role in Copenhagen, enhanced through its membership in the newly formed BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) group of advanced developing countries. In fact, the final negotiation on the Copenhagen Accords brought together the heads of state of the US and BASIC countries, and shunned the EU. Even within BASIC, India played a leading role and was much more active than China, with chief negotiator Jairam Ramesh actively presenting India as a 'deal maker' rather than a 'deal breaker' (*The Hindu*, 2009). Indeed, it was China and not India that was eventually attributed the 'porcupine' role and much of the responsibility for the failure in Copenhagen (Conrad, 2011).

One year later at COP 16 in Cancun, Ramesh clearly broke with India's traditional negotiation strategy by stating that 'all countries must agree to a legally binding commitment under an appropriate legal form' (*Hindustan Times*, 2010). This statement applies to developing countries and is in obvious contradiction with India's traditional position. Yet, it leaves room for commitments that are differentiated by levels of *per capita* emissions, historical responsibility, and economic capacity, and for those that are limited to an extent that will not impair developing countries' economic growth. Thus while the strict letter of the Indian position has changed, the spirit of the position may have not. The essential move in the late 2000s, notably under Jairam Ramesh's leadership, seems to have been in strategy, rather than in substance.

A more in-depth analysis of India's negotiation positions and strategies in recent years from Bali 2007 to Copenhagen 2009 is now presented. The analysis considers: (1) India's positions officially submitted on a number of relevant issue areas, (2) the way it negotiates, (3) whom it cooperates with, and (4) the composition of its delegation at the UNFCCC meetings.

As far as possible, the Indian data was compared to data from other countries or country groups. The dataset is comprised of official country submissions and the ENB daily negotiation summaries. Note that only one interview with an Indian negotiator, on 5 August 2010, was carried out. The interviewee had a relevant position in the Indian bureaucracy and has been involved in the UNFCCC process since the early 1990s (though he has not been the opinion leader of the delegation). For this reason, the publicly stated opinions of 'stalwarts' of the Indian position were also used (Ghosh 2012, 2007; Sethi 2010).

### **3.2. Specific Indian positions at COP 13-15, 2007-2009**

To determine country positions on the basis of official UNFCCC submissions, all submissions for the negotiation rounds from Bali to Copenhagen were numerically hand-coded using the procedure detailed in Weiler (2012, Annex 1, this issue). The mitigation targets for India, together with those for a selection of other country groups<sup>3</sup> are given in Table 1, which reveals that the official Indian position on emission reduction targets for Annex I countries is very close that of the EU.

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<sup>3</sup> The G77+China is the central group India traditionally identifies itself with. The emission targets of the AOSIS group of countries are particularly salient. The EU represents the progressive end of negotiation positions within the Annex I countries.

**Table 1** Positions on mitigation targets

	<b>India submissions</b>	<b>G77(+China) country submissions</b>	<b>AOSIS country submissions</b>	<b>EU submissions</b>
Annex I emission reduction targets for 2020 relative to 1990 (%)	32.5	40.1 (5.0)	43.4 (1.2)	30.1
Commitments for developing countries (0= For none,...,100=For all)	0	5.8 (22.4)	0	33.3

Note: Standard deviation is given in parentheses when the result was computed using submissions from more than one country.

Source: Coding of submissions and information from interviews (Weiler, this issue, Annex 1).

The Indian delegate interviewed, however, shared the mean G77+China position, which comes close to the substantially stronger position put forward by AOSIS members (an additional reduction by about 10 percentage points, over 40% rather than 30% relative to 1990 levels). This figure may reflect either some disillusionment over industrialised country attitudes in the aftermath of Copenhagen, or the variety of different (subjective) positions within the Indian delegation. There was an even stronger divergence between the official Indian submissions and the delegate's stated position relative to commitments for developing countries. This nicely reflects the fact that the interview was carried out after Copenhagen while the submissions data were collected since Bali 2007. According to these submissions, which are also reflected in public statements by the senior Indian negotiators Ghosh (2012) and Sethi (2010), India does not accept commitments for developing countries. Yet, in the interview, the Indian delegate showed a much more flexible position. In fact he argued that developing countries should indeed take up binding commitments such that different types of countries should face different types of obligations: large emerging countries (e.g. those of BASIC) should commit to energy intensity targets, whilst small countries should commit to low carbon development paths. These commitments should be differentiated in terms of energy use *per capita* or emissions *per capita*.

This position, in line with Jairam Ramesh's policy shift discussed above, reflects a mix of the traditional choice of relevant indicators (on a *per capita* basis) and the new recognition of binding commitments for developing countries. The delegate also supported the need for measurable, reportable and verifiable (MRV) mitigation actions in the commitments of developing countries, which explicitly underscores the change in the Indian position during COP 15.

In other developing countries, the negotiation position on commitments for developing economies is highly divergent. For example, note the extremely high standard deviation for G77+China for which country submissions covered the full range from 0 to 100. The official position for AOSIS looks surprisingly firm, despite their direct interest in emission reductions by all countries. Yet, as for India, when individual delegates were asked at the interviews, the result was very different, with a mean value of 64.3. In total, seven interviews with AOSIS representatives were carried out, and none of them was of the opinion that all non-Annex I countries should be excluded from future commitments.

Table 2 lists additional issue areas (adaptation, mitigation finance, the role of market mechanisms) relevant during the negotiations from Bali to Copenhagen. In this context, it is relevant to also compare India's position to that of similar countries, such as the other large emerging economies of the BASIC group (thus the AOSIS-column of Table 1 was replaced by one for the BASIC countries as a whole). In addition, unlike the issues relating to emission reduction targets, the position of the EU was less clearly defined within Annex I. Thus the mean value for Annex I as a whole is shown.

The expected differences regarding adaptation and mitigation finance, between average Annex I country positions and those of the developing countries (including India), were observed. Otherwise, India generally took an intermediate position between the member countries of G77 and BASIC on the one hand, and the Annex I

countries on the other hand. India's submissions regarding mitigation finance have reflected the lowest demands on the Western world among the four BASIC countries. The relatively moderate Indian position is also reflected in the negotiation positions regarding the concrete implementation of adaptation and mitigation finance.

The Indian position regarding the use of market mechanisms exactly matches the Annex I average. Given its strong and positive experience of the CDM, India has clearly been more open towards such mechanisms than the average developing country. It should be noted, however, that for all issue areas, the mean values for the different country groups were based on a wide range of divergent positions that overlap to a great extent across groups.

Generally, the evidence from the dataset supports the view that India is a country that takes moderate positions in the climate change negotiations, positions that indicate that it is willing to forge a compromise and that do not reflect its traditional image as a defensive, value-claiming negotiator. While India's positions have become even more flexible under the leadership of Minister Ramesh in Copenhagen, this seems to reinforce an existing trend.

**Table 2** Negotiation positions on additional issue areas

	<b>India submissions</b>	<b>G77(+China) country submissions</b>	<b>BASIC country submissions</b>	<b>Annex I country submissions</b>
Adaptation finance by industrialised countries (0=Voluntary, ...,100=Mandatory)	70	82.5 (17.7)	75.7 (21.2)	52.6 (16.0)
Mitigation finance by industrialised countries (0=Voluntary, ...,100=Mandatory)	63	55.2 (24.3)	73.1 (18.0)	45.7 (6.3)
Use of market mechanisms (0=None,..., 100=All under discussion)	75	48.7 (21.0)	59.3 (34.4)	75.0 (25.9)

Note: Standard deviation is given in parentheses when the result was computed using submissions from more than one country.

Source: Coding of submissions and information from interviews (Weiler, this issue, Annex 1).

India's position on adaptation finance stated in the delegate interview was stronger than the one in the official submissions and contained a request for mandatory financing of around US\$100 billion per year by industrialised countries. This difference could be driven by the fact that the interview was carried out at a time when an agreement along these lines was already achieved as an integral part of the Copenhagen Accords (although it still lacked the appropriate specifications to guarantee its implementation). According to the Indian delegate, the funds should be allocated by the double majority of donors and recipients, rather than by recipients alone. They should not simply be disbursed, free of conditions, to a designated national authority, but allocated in a more controlled manner to pre-defined programmes and activities, especially in the area of adaptation.

### **3.3. Strategy choice and choice of partners**

If India has moved away from its traditional role as a defensive, value-claiming negotiator, this should not only be reflected in its negotiation positions, but also in the way the delegation has argued and forged coalitions. The Indian negotiation strategy was assessed based on a number of questions posed to the delegate, and was compared to the answers given by other countries' representatives during the interviews at the UNFCCC negotiation round from Bali to Copenhagen. Table 3 lists the Indian response to these questions, along with the median response by delegates from G77+China and Annex I countries respectively. The confidence interval reveals whether the differences with respect to the Indian position have been significant. The Indian delegate conveyed a picture of India as a transparent negotiator, with firm convictions, one that is ready and flexible enough to search for compromise and suggest new solutions. While self-reporting by the delegates may have biased the

responses towards the (perceived normatively superior) value-creating, soft strategies, and against value-claiming, hard strategies, it was assumed that this would hold for all delegates in a similar way so that the comparison between India and the median values for the two country groups would remain valid (for more on hard and soft bargaining strategies, see Bailer, this issue).

**Table 3 Strategic negotiation behaviour<sup>a</sup>**

Strategies	India	G77+China			Annex I		
		Median	95% confidence interval		Median	95% confidence interval	
<i>Soft strategies</i>							
Express understanding for diverging interest	7	7	5	7	7	5	9
Propose new solutions in common interest	9	7	6	7	7	7	9
Exchange concessions for mutual benefit	4.5	5	3	7	5.5	1	7
<i>Hard strategies</i>							
Declare not to change position under any circumstance	3	3	3	6	5	1	9
Criticise others' positions	7	5	3	7	5	3	5
Ignore or reject demands made by others	7	6	3	7	6	1	9
Hide actual objectives to reach stronger negotiation position	3	5	3	7	5	1	7
Demand concessions for own benefit	7	5	5	7	5	1	9
Use threats (e.g. sanctions, trade restrictions, etc.)	1	1	1	3	1	1	5
Use promises (e.g. concessions, aid, etc.) <sup>b</sup>	1	1	1	5	4	1	7

Note: <sup>a</sup>Questions referred to the strategic behaviour of the relevant country in the open negotiations (rather than internal group meetings). Figures range from 1=Never, to 9=Very often. Confidence intervals are binomial-based and computed without interpolation. Maximum number of observations for G77+China=33, and for Annex I=9.

<sup>b</sup>See Bailer (this issue) for classifying a promise as a hard bargaining strategy.

Source: Interview data (see Weiler, this issue, Annex 1).

Table 3 reveals that overall, the two comparison groups do not show substantial differences in the choice of their strategies. According to the delegates' own reports, the median Annex I country makes more use of hard strategies for only two out of the seven specific strategy types, their confidence intervals are large and they always overlap. There is even less of a difference in the case of using soft bargaining strategies. India has stood out for frequently proposing new solutions, significantly above the G77 median, and has been matched by only a few Annex I countries. This well reflects the special role India has had during the recent negotiation rounds. Generally, the Indian delegate presented India as a country that has largely made use of soft



bargaining strategies, at least to the same extent as the typical G77/Annex I member country. The Indian delegate's answer regarding the exchange of concessions was not easily put into a number. The listed value of 4.5 is the authors' own shortcut for the delegate's more complex answer, which indicated that India usually does not make concessions until the end of a negotiation round, but finally offers a lot of concessions and is ready to contribute to a mutually acceptable compromise. To some extent, this could also be observed under the new Minister and delegation chief Jayanti Natrajan on the final night of the Durban conference in December 2011.

Evidence is more mixed with respect to the use of hard strategies. In many respects, the reported Indian strategy has been at the lower end of the range of answers. According to the delegate interviewed, in recent years, India has never used threats or promises, very rarely hid its objectives, and very rarely declared that it will not change positions under any circumstance. The delegate's opinion on the latter case is especially remarkable, given the fixed and fully intransigent positions India has been traditionally known for.

At the same time India has reportedly used some hard bargaining strategies more often than other delegations. It has frequently criticised other parties, ignored or rejected their demands, and demanded concessions. In this respect, it has placed itself at the 'harder' end of G77 countries (it is even outside the confidence interval for Annex I countries regarding the use of criticism as a bargaining strategy). Evidence from recent UNFCCC negotiations suggests that these strategies have continued to be important, and that their use can be explained by the firm belief in the normative imperative of India's central positions.

Overall, India appears to be a very transparent player, one that is openly critical of the negotiation process, and clear (rather than obfuscatory) in its demands. Results for the use of hard strategies were mixed. While the traditional stance was still visible to

some extent, it has now become embedded in a more flexible overall strategic framework, supplemented by the simultaneous use of soft strategies. This conclusion has also been reached by external observers. For example, according to the *Hindustan Times* (2011), Christiana Figueres, Secretary General of the UNFCCC, summarised her impression thus:

‘India represented its own interests and stood firm with other developing countries, and then was incredibly helpful in showing that it’s mostly in the interest of developing countries to move forward’.

Overall, the analysis strengthens the case for using the metaphor of the ‘tiger’ rather than that of the ‘porcupine’ to describe modern Indian negotiation behaviour in international climate policy.

In terms of coalitions, India is traditionally anchored within the G77 where it has frequently occupied a leadership position. Correspondingly, in our interview, G77 was mentioned as the single most important group India is a member of. Yet, the BASIC group, rather than G77, was reported to be the most influential on India’s own negotiation position. Thus, even if India still feels close to the large group of (mainly very poor) developing countries within G77, common preferences may drive it closer to the subset of the large emerging economies that constitute BASIC.

The coding of statements during the negotiations as reflected in the ENB provided a relatively objective assessment of India’s actual closeness to and support for other countries and groups. Table 4 lists all of India’s mutually supportive (=‘joint’) statements with its ten most important partners during the negotiation rounds from Bali to Copenhagen. A ‘joint statement’ was defined as any situation in which India explicitly and expressively supported the statement of another country or group, or

vice-versa. The partners with the highest number of joint statements were then considered as the ‘most important’.

**Table 4: Joint statements with India during public negotiation sessions**

Partner	Number of joint statements	Joint statements of India's statements (%)	Joint statements of partner's statements (%)
1) China	41	20.0	15.4
2) Brazil	23	11.2	10.2
3) Saudi Arabia	19	9.3	8.4
4) African Group	11	5.4	8.3
5) Philippines	10	4.9	17.2
6) Algeria	9	4.4	25.0
7) South Africa	9	4.4	6.9
8) AOSIS	8	3.9	3.5
9) G77+China	7	3.4	1.8
10) Indonesia	7	3.4	12.5

Note: Partner countries were ordered by the number of joint statements with India.

Sources: Coding of submissions (see Weiler, this issue, Annex 1).

Clearly, the most relevant partner country for India has been China. Out of 205 Indian interventions reported in the ENB, 41 were in support of (or supported by) simultaneous statements made by China. The second most important partner – albeit with only about half the number of joint interventions – was (another BASIC country) Brazil. Unexpectedly and possibly related to very specific issues under discussion, it was closely followed by Saudi Arabia.

With only 7 joint statements and 3.4% of all Indian interventions, joint statements with the G77+China were relatively rare. For the G77+China, joint statements with India represented only 1.8% of its interventions. This level of mutual support was much less than would be expected for a strong partnership situation. One might object that there has been no need for India to say anything in support of G77+China statements as India is itself part of this group. Yet, such supportive statements by individual member countries have not been unusual. China, for instance, has made many more joint statements with the G77+China despite being a member of this group, too. Indeed with

55 joint statements, the G77+China is China's most important partner, pushing India back into second place.

Given these figures, it seems that India even more than China has gradually loosened its traditional coalition, and has set a clear priority on the new partnership with other emerging nations within BASIC. Given the joint economic relevance of BASIC countries and their impact on the development of global emissions, no deal is possible without the consent of this group. The new alliance thus has a qualitatively very different meaning (and different consequences) for India than the traditional coalitions within the G77. BASIC clearly represents a strong middle power coalition with the potential to play a decisive role in the negotiation process.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the fact that poverty remains a wide-spread phenomenon in India, its delegation does not appear so much to view India as a poor developing country any more. This was emphasized by a remark by the Indian delegate. When asked why he would opt for direct donor funding of individual projects rather than for a maximum freedom of recipient countries in determining the allocation of adaptation funds, the delegate clarified his belief that India would not receive any of these funds anyway. The perceived decrease in similarity with poor developing countries appears to be a further factor that has driven India away from its traditional negotiation strategy.

### **3.4. The composition of the Indian delegation**

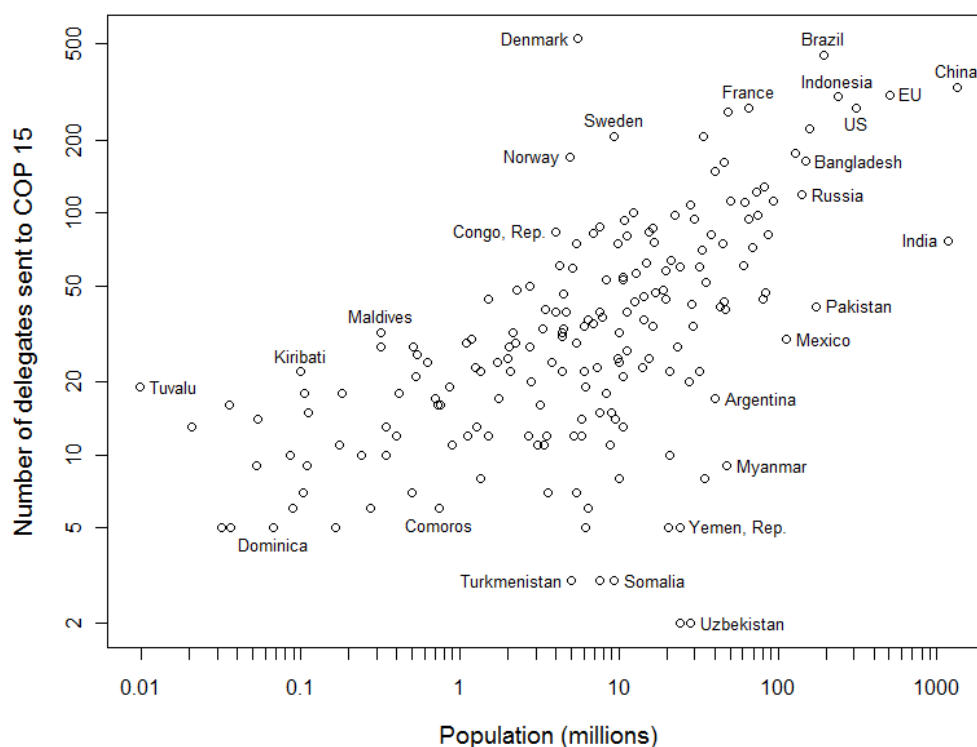
Does the composition of the Indian delegation reflect the change in negotiation strategy? One would typically assume that the delegation of a successful dynamic broker should be relatively large (in order to participate in all relevant meetings), well-

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<sup>4</sup> On middle power coalitions and leadership, see Higgot and Cooper (1990).

organised and well-experienced. A list of delegation members was available from the UNFCCC website (UNFCCC, 2011). Upon closer examination, the most striking feature was that the Indian delegation has, in fact, always been very small. The number of delegates was 41 in Bali 2007, 23 in Poznan 2008, 77 in Copenhagen 2009, and 29 in Cancun 2010. The delegations of other comparable countries have been larger by far. China and Indonesia, for instance, sent more than 300 delegates to Copenhagen. Figure 1 provides a general overview of the number of delegates at Copenhagen in relation to the countries' population size.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 1** Delegation size v population size at COP 15



Note: Logarithmic scales.

Sources: UNFCCC (2011), World Bank (2011).

Clearly, the limited number of delegates curtails the possibility of attending all relevant parallel meetings and of taking part in all the side-events. Notably the side-events also provide a valuable exchange with research and other parts of civil society, and a

<sup>5</sup> Formally, among the non-Annex I countries Brazil had the largest delegation with 450 delegates. However, all Brazilian nationals that attended the COP (including NGO members or members from business lobbies) were automatically integrated in the delegation. This was not the case for other delegations so that a comparison with Brazil is not very meaningful.

platform to promote a country's position in a more open and deliberative context. When interviewed, the Indian delegate recognised the relevant role of side-events. According to him, although India has often been on the programme and has clearly wanted to participate in these discussions, actual participation has been severely limited due to the time constraints on the few delegates. In fact, in a sample of side-events in 2007, attendance of Indian negotiators was zero, while Latin American and African countries eagerly participated. However, NGO participation from India in the side events was quite strong (Hjerpe et al., 2008, p. 39, 41).

Apart from its small size, another notable feature of the Indian delegation was its limitation to (current or former) members of the civil service. This is rather unusual: 87% of UNFCCC member countries' delegations have also included selected representatives from NGOs, the media, academia and / or industry. Yet, given that a variety of institutions already have to be included within government (more than ten in Copenhagen alone), the inclusion of additional non-governmental actors might render coordination within the delegation extremely difficult. Despite the fact that there has been no direct representation, exchange with the research community is guaranteed, at least to some extent, due to the movement of some delegates between research and civil service. An advantage may be that limiting delegation membership to civil servants reduces the influence of special interests.

The composition of the Indian delegation has a number of other key advantages. The powerful role of India's dynamic delegation leader, Jairam Ramesh, between 2009 and 2011 has already been emphasised above. And generally, the qualifications of the delegates is relatively high: fluency in English, the main language of the negotiations, the high education level of the Indian elite, and their frequent experience in international civil service, provides delegates with high proficiency in the international arena. Moreover, many members of the Indian delegation have gained experience in

international climate policy over the years. Interestingly, it seems to have become a common strategy to retain experienced staff in the delegation even when they move to different ministries or to external employers outside the Indian civil service. The delegation thus shows continuity beyond the rotation of officials between agencies. Despite the loss of some of its long-standing members after Ramesh's strong interventions at Copenhagen, over 35% of the Indian delegation at COP 16 were part of the delegation at COP 15, 20% at COP 14 and 10% at COP 13 (UNFCCC, 2011). In sum, the available evidence indicates that the relatively small delegation size may have been compensated for by the effective selection of delegates. This view is also supported if the relatively high ranks of many delegates within their respective institutions are considered. Indeed, the senior civil servants or diplomats of the delegation have been typically complemented by local embassy staff. For example, at COP 16 in Cancun, 6 out of the 29 delegation members came from the Indian embassy in Mexico.

The strategies chosen in the late-2000s by the Indian delegation have been far too open and accommodating to be consistent with India's traditionally defensive, pure distributive strategy. While the core positions of the Indian delegation may not have changed in essence, their formulations have become softer. India is not too far from Annex I or EU positions in many concrete issues currently under negotiation. The country has been moving away from a fixed bloc alignment with G77+China and closer to a stronger coalition with other middle powers (i.e. BASIC). While the Indian delegation has always been relatively small, its other characteristics (e.g. experience, education, fluency in English, and, in particular, the dynamic delegation leader from 2009-2011) appear to be well suited to support the country's new and more dynamic role.

It should be noted that in many ways, Jairam Ramesh's role has been crucial for the recent dynamics observed. At COP 17 in Durban 2011, the new minister, Ms. Jayanti Natrajan, largely returned to earlier rhetoric. India may have returned to its traditional porcupine strategy. Yet the data indicate that the more dynamic developments observed already started before Ramesh took office in 2009. A more general trend towards more dynamic negotiation behaviour in international climate policy is also supported by prior studies (Mathur and Varughese, 2009, Vihma, 2011, Shukla and Dhar, 2011). This suggests that despite some variance driven by the personality of the Minister, the underlying trend may continue. In this case, the tiger can be expected to reappear soon.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Indian international climate policy has been traditionally characterised by a defensive 'Third Worldist' rhetoric and a pure distributive strategy, similar to other areas of international negotiations. Following the economic transformation starting in the early 1990s, some observers have noted a change in this strategy, from 'porcupine' to 'tiger' (Mohan, 2003), a transformation that has been clearly reflected in the evidence from the international climate negotiations. There has been, especially since the mid-2000s, a strategic orientation moving towards the more frequent use of integrative elements, and towards greater flexibility and dynamics, underpinned by an increased domestic pressure to engage in climate policy. While these developments appear to have followed a general trend and become visible in official submissions and the daily negotiation summaries provided by the ENB already before COP 15 in Copenhagen, it has been primarily under the delegation leadership of Jairam Ramesh that India has recently exhibited some similarities with the powerful, dynamic and versatile tiger.



This is shown not only in the outcome of the interview with the Indian delegate (who may be more accommodating than the ‘stalwarts’ of the Indian delegation), but also through a number of other indicators. India has shown some flexibility and integrative leadership, has changed positions when it has realised that there are previously unnoticed benefits (as in the case of the CDM) and has assumed individual responsibility in critical situations (as when it directly dealt with the US to negotiate the Copenhagen Agreement). Despite persistent poverty and a level of *per capita* GHG emissions which is over ten times lower than that of industrialised countries (and four times lower than that of China), India has become a recognised and leading member of BASIC, and, more generally, a pivotal player in international climate policy. In the 2009 Copenhagen and 2010 Cancun Climate Change Conferences, India’s dynamic and decisive role was repeatedly acknowledged by the international media and by the Secretary General of the UNFCCC. In substance, the shift may not have been considerable, and it remains to be seen whether it is persistent. Strategically, it certainly has been substantial.

While the new Environment Minister Jayanti Natrajan, who took office in July 2011, has tended to fall back on India’s traditional negotiation style, the general dynamics that have led to a more open negotiation strategy seem to be difficult to stop, as the underlying trends – both domestically and internationally - persist. These trends include increasing pressure on domestic energy resources, the search for new business opportunities (e.g. in the CDM), and pressure from other developing countries. They may also be related to increased public awareness of India’s own vulnerability to climate change, and to increased media coverage.

Some of these factors reflect the determinants of strategy choice suggested in the cross-country study by Bailer (this issue), and the case study on Russia by Andonova and Alexieva (this issue). In Russia, as in India, the rising recognition of the country’s own

vulnerability to climate change and the financial benefits from emissions trading also appear to explain a shift in strategy (from pure obstructionism towards a somewhat more consensual orientation). This is in line with theoretical arguments of negotiation theory according to which a country that has much to lose from no (further) agreement tends to negotiate for a compromise (Bailer, this issue).

The case study on Russia also shows some – albeit more limited – effect of the change of key politicians. In the cases of both India and Russia, this effect is not explained by appeal to easily measured characteristics (such as party ideology or years in office as an international negotiator), but rather by appeal to the personality of the negotiator and other, more subtle personal characteristics. These are more easily captured in country-case studies than in the cross-sectional analyses of Bailer (this issue) and Weiler (this issue).

While the development of strategy choice is important, it may be even more important to know which strategies actually lead to success in negotiations (for a discussion of the Indian case, see Michaelowa and Michaelowa, 2011). As the international climate negotiations are ongoing, success for a country in terms of reaching its own preferred negotiation position is still difficult to determine. However, in terms of international recognition, the success of the tiger strategy is more than obvious.

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